

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, August, 1782.
Partly in Cypher. Transcription: The Writings of James
Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's
Sons, 1900-1910.**

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.¹

1 From the Madison Papers (1840).

Philadelphia, September 3, 1782.

Dear Sir, —You will again be disappointed at the opening of this, since it contains no European intelligence on the subject of peace. Among other reasons which render it astonishing that we should be long uninformed, a material one is, that neither the Court of France, nor our Ministers, can be insensible of the inexpediency of leaving the people at large so exposed to misrepresentations of the enemy. I am happy to find, by your letter of the twenty-fourth, and those received from my other correspondents by yesterday's post, that so cautious an ear is given to every thing which comes from them of a flattering aspect.

The enclosed hand-bill, published a few days ago, will inform you of the steps taken at Charleston towards an evacuation of that place. It is said to have given fresh violence to the fermentations in New York.

Another petition from Kentucky has been received by Congress, contending for the right of Congress to create new States, and praying for an exertion of it in their behalf. A copy will be sent to the Governor by the Delegates. Mr. Lee moved that the original

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should be referred to him by Congress. The debate which ensued was terminated by an adjournment, and has not been revived.

General Washington writes to Congress that Carleton had concurred in the proposition for a general cartel so far as to appoint a Commissioner for that purpose. There is little probability, however, that he has authority to settle such a cartel on the principles which Congress had in view, namely, those of a National Convention. It was thought, by some, that this would put to the test the sincerity of their professions on the subject of independence.

I believe I did not acquaint you, on a former occasion, that the prisoners who had lately returned from captivity in England were discharged, in consequence of an agreement, by Franklin, that a like number of the army of Cornwallis should be given for them. This bold step at first gave much offence. Compassion, however, for the patriotic captive stifled reproaches. They will probably come out yet, unless subsequent events discountenance them.

There are, it seems, three letters in the post-office from Carleton to the Governor, which do not appear to have been licensed, nor is it known how they got into that channel. The curiosity of people on this point is inconceivable.

A very unlucky accident has happened to one of the fleet of our Allies. After it got safe into the harbour of Boston, the unskilfulness or negligence of a pilot suffered a seventy-four to strike on a rock, the wound occasioned by which proved mortal. Most of the furniture has been saved.

I have not yet presented the note to Cohen which you have been so good as to enclose me. The general obstacle to advances here, to be replaced in Virginia, has been the balance

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in trade against the latter. This is the current answer to attempts to negotiate drafts on Virginia. My next will inform you of the result of the experiment of your note. If its success depends merely on a confidence in your credit, it will certainly be productive. Mr. Ross has unlimited credit in this place. May it not be made instrumental to our supply? At least it would be well to consult him when an occasion presents. His bills on Whiteside will command any sum that may be wanted.

The French army has been passing through this place for several days northward. The last division will pass to-morrow or the day after. The praises bestowed on their discipline and sobriety in Virginia are repeated here with equal cordiality and justice.